

**Tarvin Community Centre Committee of Management**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Tarvin Community Centre at 7.30pm**  
**28th September 2021**

Present: Ted Lush (Chair), Jane Lush (Treasurer), Jane Armstrong (Secretary), Roy Brereton (Building Management) , Lyn Brunton (Website/social Media), Pete Brunton, Sue Hardacre (Booking Secretary), Brian Hardacre, Jane Hough (Films) Sharon Nolan (Tarvin Gardening Soc), Merryn Shaw (Ashton Hayes and Tarvin Flower Cub), Gill Williams (WI), Helen Flynn (Tarvin Parish Council).

Mike Howard (Ashton Hayes Theatre Club), Andrew Walker (Ashton Hayes Theatre Club), Robert Ford (Tarvin Parish Council) Yvette Owen (AHTC)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

TL welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apology from Fiona Lewis (Arts)

**2 Minutes of 2020 AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 8th September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by TL

**3 Chairman's Report - Ted Lush**

See report attached, the Community Centre's achievements, successes, frustrations and the future.

TL thanked all the Committee, especially the officers for their hard work, also the excellent work of Chris Leavy the caretaker

TL read aloud the objectives of the Community Centre Charity and-despite a difficult year concluded that they had been met.

**3A Booking Report - Sue Hardacre**

See report attached

SH highlighted the problems that were faced this year, having had a very full programme that then became empty with the centre closed.

SH recognises that the pandemic is not over but hopes that next year's report reflects the normality of previous years.

**3B Buildings and Maintenance - Roy Brereton**

RB reported that In the last year during lockdown the CC used the time to update and refurbish.

Lighting, the stage, front of stage, the Hall floor were some of refurbishments completed. The Toilet facilities are the next project - to bring them up to an acceptable standard and to provide more space in the female toilets.

An architect has drawn up plans for a redesign and after a quantity surveyor had costed them at around £80K it was agreed by the committee that this was too expensive.

A bathroom company gave a quote for a refurbishment but at around £40K and Roy felt that this was not the answer

Roy reported that he is rethinking the plans with more attention given to the additional and linked drainage problems that we face.

#### **4 Financial Report**

Jane Lush (Treasurer)

The Treasurer presented the income and expenditure account and balance sheet for the financial year 2020/2021.

Figures show a difference between this year and the previous one. Lettings income was very much reduced. CC usually has an income from regular events such as the quiz, fete, plays etc of around £5K but there has been none.

There have been grants from CWaC of around £21K that were very easy to apply for and receive. The amount spent on refurbishments was very similar.

Our largest expenditure is to the landlord (CwaC) but in view of the pandemic this was reduced and a saving made.

Total funds in hand at the end of 2020/2021 are around £63K with the deposit account accruing very little interest.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 we are in a healthy financial position.

#### **5. Election of Committee Members**

The following are continuing as Committee members and Trustees. No election was required.

Ted Lush , Jane Lush, Sue Hardacre, Brian Hardacre, Jane Armstrong, Lyn Brunton, Pete Brunton, Jane Hough and all holding specific roles are prepared to continue.

Fiona Lewis (CRTA events) is stepping back from her position after the current CRTA events are completed.

Roy Brereton intends to step down from Buildings and maintenance after the Toilet plans are settled.

Helen Flynn will remain as the Parish Council appointee.

The following were re-appointed as Associate Committee members (non-trustees):  
Merryn Shaw (Ashton Hayes and Tarvin Flower Club), Sharon Nolan (Tarvin Gardening Society), Gill Williams (Tarvin WI)

Sue H suggested we advertise specifically for a member who is interested in the Arts (CRTA) as we did to find Fiona.

#### **6 Any Other Business**

There were no other questions or comments.

Meeting closed at 8.01pm

## **2020/21 Chairman's Annual Report on Tarvin Community Centre**

### **Introduction**

1. This report covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, a year which has been like no other. Covid-19 had a dramatic impact on what the Committee was able to achieve and how the Centre could be run. Even so, progress was made, and I think our residents should be thankful that their Centre is run so professionally by a very competent Committee, supported by an exceptional caretaker.

### **What was achieved?**

1 First, the Committee coped with all the changes necessary in order to be able to operate within the Government's rules. Fortunately Cheshire Community Action was able to offer timely and helpful advice regarding how rules should be interpreted. Over the year five modifications to "the rules" were made. The actions of the Committee ensured that the Centre was always available to users, in a safe environment whenever it was allowed.

2. Secondly, the Committee invested in the Centre. We now have a refurbished stage with lighting, floor and curtains to a professional standard. The former oil tank room was converted for storage and during 2021/22 it has been used to store modern mobile staging for tiered seating. Special mobile purpose-built storage bins, which fit under the stage, were also built and installed.
3. Thirdly, the facilities at the Centre have ensured that even in difficult circumstances it has great appeal and new users, including a private training company, were attracted to use the facility.

### **Why was success achieved?**

4. The Centre was only successful because the Committee, made up of local residents, was prepared to put in so much effort. I would particularly like to put on record my personal thanks for the efforts of Jane Armstrong (Secretary), Roy Brereton (Building), Lyn Brunton (Website/tech), Pete Brunton (Films), Sue Hardacre (Bookings), Fiona Lewis (Arts) and Jane Lush (Treasurer). Our other Committee members also played their part to make the Centre so successful in very trying circumstances. The committed hard work of the Committee which I am proud to lead made my role as Chairman easy.
5. Some members of the Committee are concerned that the average age of the Committee is increasing and that this becomes an issue when tasks are of a physical nature and for succession planning.. Personally I am not so concerned about the first issue. This is because I know that, when necessary, I am able to call on younger, fitter and stronger members of the community to undertake specific tasks. On the second issue I do accept that it would be hugely beneficial to have younger members on the Committee, so that when older members want to step down there are people who are trained, committed and keen who can step up and assume more prominent roles, thus ensuring continuity. However, the reality is that people who are younger often do not have the time to give as their priority is normally family and work
6. The other reason for our success is our caretaker, Chris Leavy, who despite only working 15 hours per week ensures that the Centre is always clean, properly serviced and available for the variety of users, some of whom are very demanding. The Committee was very keen that Chris should never be furloughed during lockdowns, and this was achieved. As a consequence Chris was able to carry out significant improvements during lockdowns, including to the Hall floor,

the front of the stage, the walls behind the stage and bringing the oil tank room into beneficial use. He also ensured that the various contractors employed by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC), our landlord, had all the help and assistance they needed. Finally when problems with the building occurred Chris ensured our landlord was advised and action requested.

## **Frustrations**

7. Our landlord can be very slow to react to problems, which is frustrating for the Committee. We put pressure on them for the flat roof to be comprehensively dealt with because in heavy rain it does leak and piecemeal patching has proved to be ineffective. Something may happen in 2021/22.
8. The grounds are another source of frustration. Grass cutting was spasmodic and despite many requests trees, hedges and shrubs were not cut back. The one beacon of excellence were the tubs outside the entrance, which were planted up and maintained by Heather Excell. The Committee was delighted and grateful for her hard work. Sadly much of the time, because of lockdowns, not many people were able to enjoy the colourful show.
9. The final frustration was CWaC deciding in November to move out of the offices which occupy the other half of the building. This is not only because we were deprived of occasional letting income, but also because our caretaker, who also cleaned those offices, had his future put into doubt. Luckily Chris has been given an alternative placement but the fact that he was not on site in the winter evenings had obvious security implications. There are also service panels for the burglar and fire alarms situated on the office side which cannot be accessed by the Committee if there is a problem. We understand that CWaC is reviewing its office provision; if and when the offices are going to be brought back into use remains a mystery.

## **The future**

10. Covid-19 reduced our income in 2020/21 by about 50%. However, Government grants together with some financial concessions from our landlord ensured that the Committee was able to meet all its financial obligations and even invest. Our financial strength also allowed us to put on entertainment events, when allowed, even though it was likely that these would run at a loss. As I look beyond 2020/21 it is clear that it will take at least 18 months for things to return to normal, which means that the priority of the Committee is to ensure that we remain financially strong and are in a position to meet the fundamental objective of the charity which is vitally important and set below.

*The object of the Charity shall be the provision and maintenance of a community centre for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Tarvin (hereinafter called "the area of benefit") without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.*

Ted Lush, Chairman of Tarvin Community Centre Committee of Management May 2021

## **Booking Secretary Report – April 202 to March 2021 Sue Hardacre**

This is a report that starts with a blank calendar page and ends with a blank calendar page – it has been indeed a very strange time. In the run up to the first lockdown, the Community Centre was extremely busy. In the week starting Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> there were 33 separate events taking place including a children's theatre performance and a packed Quiz night. The following week there were 16 and then there were none. The lockdown, when it finally came, was total and, as we all tried to work out how we would cope with the

new reality, the Community Centre went silent. The hardest hit were Ashton Hayes Theatre Club who cancelled their performance of Madame Bovary on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, their final rehearsal.

Working throughout this quiet time was our Caretaker, who filled the time very productively taking care of both us and the few members of staff working next door. The departure of these few staff caused concern to us all, and the future status of the Professional Centre has yet to be confirmed.

In June we were approached by a young student dancer with a request to use the Hall to complete a part of the practical element of her performing arts degree. As she was alone and quite self-sufficient, we were delighted to oblige and help her on her way.

It was not until July that there were more stirrings of life. We were able to offer access to CW&C Educational Support Team to assist a young, local teenage pupil. Tarvin AFC held a socially distanced awards ceremony, an individual booked a room for a band practice and the U3A Book Club ventured cautiously into the Edna Rose Room.

The easing of social restrictions also coincided with our quieter summer holiday period, but we were delighted to welcome the Tango dancers who came for regular rehearsals. We were able to provide room for training days for Kefax Ltd, who provide training for workers in the power industry. I am delighted to say that they have become a regular client.

As we went into autumn, a few classes started, always working within the Covid restrictions now required. Class numbers were lower and extensive hygiene measures put in place. Ashton Hayes again tried to put on Madame Bovary in September but cancelled again fearing audiences might be hesitant to return. Ballet, Pilates and both Zumba and Zumba Gold returned, and we hosted a family wake. But there was no Library, though a mobile service was started in November. We offered a Library Café service to run alongside, but it was little used. We were able to offer space to Tarporley High School to hold a series of exam retakes, a new class, an Art Group, moved from the smaller Parish Rooms to the Edna Rose Room and Sunshine Yoga, a class for little ones, started. But so many of the regulars were missing – no Bingo or Toddlers, no Slimming World or Yoga and most definitely no films or plays. This situation, tentative starts, tentative enquiries and some tentative activities lasted until mid-January when again, lockdown was imposed.

This has been a very odd time as Booking Secretary. Long periods of quiet ensured that the momentum built up previously was lost, and with that, a degree of confidence in the ability to manage the system. Space was left on the calendar in case old customers wanted to return, but the need to re-establish income had to be a major factor in determining use. Working out what could and could not happen needed care, and it was necessary to ensure that users had considered the risks and had a strategy to mitigate them.

While we all recognise that the pandemic is not over, I sincerely hope that the next report for the next AGM, reflects a normality that more resembles earlier years than this one.